July 21, 1988

Dear Gail,

Just wanted to let you know how grateful I am for your very generous support of me and the Archives on the occasion of my 49th birthday. Our treasurer told me that he received your check a couple days ago, and I just received the card and check that you sent here to my house. How sweet of you. I deeply appreciate your sacrifice, as I know that you have your own financial concerns.

The party was a big success. One hundred-plus people showed up--in some cases people that I hadn't seen for years. It was like a reunion of the original planning committee for the Gay Center for Social Services that we put together in the early 70's. Especially touching was the surprise arrival of Jerry White all the way from Santa Barbara. Jerry has AIDS, early dementia, and is very weak. So he really put himself out on my behalf.

Over $1200 was raised for the Lesbian & Gay Archives of San Diego. I was presented with commendations from the California State Assembly, San Diego County Board of Supervisors, San Diego City Council, and a special proclamation from Mayor Maureen O'Connor declaring July 19, 1988 to be "Jess Jessop Day" in the City of San Diego. Enclosed are copies of those proclamations.

Pat & Matt, as well as former co-workers from Scripps Memorial Hospital were there. It certainly was the grandest tribute that I've ever received. Mary Lou, my next-door neighbor was in attendance, as well as Miki Jackson (a woman from my civil-disobedience group in Washington, D.C.) from Los Angeles. I received a call from Heather Welty in New York City, and one from Morris Kight in Los Angeles. So you can see that it was a grand day.

Ecstacy is often short-lived. George Kelly, whose picture appears on the cover of the enclosed Gay Times, who I met in Washington, D.C. when we were arrested at the Supreme Court, who accompanied me to the March on Sacramento for Lesbian & Gay Rights, and who was my date at the Pride Prom on June 10th, and who came down from Los Angeles just to see me ride in our Pride Parade this year, died this morning. He was a diabetic who didn't take as good care of himself as he should have. And though he was known to be HIV positive, he was until very recently asymptomatic, and had not been diagnosed with AIDS. He was admitted to the hospital a couple of weeks ago in diabetic ketoacidosis and seemed to be coming out of that crisis after about a week in ICU. He then had a sudden respiratory crisis, was intubated, placed on a ventilator. He remained in coma until his transition this morning. At the onset of the crisis last Thursday, I dropped everything and made an emergency trip to L.A. and spent two days hovering around the ICU of Hollywood Presbyterian Hospital.

Clearly, the situation was very grim. They had just diagnosed pneumocystis carinii pneumonia (PCP) which also confirmed the presence of AIDS. The suddenness of all of this is shocking and devoustating to those of us who are close to George. We members of George's gay & lesbian family have gathered around each other to provide that all-important love and support that we can not live without. We are called upon so often these days to do that that it is beginning to get routine. But it doesn't ever get easier.

I had only known George for 10 months, but in that time we had become very close. He was a model of sweetness and gentleness--the kind of person that I am always attracted to. I feel an enormous loss and overwhelming sadness. He was 27.

Please share this letter and contents with Mom.

Love, Bob